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# The Fictility of Porcelain: Making and Shaping Meaning in Lady Dorothea Banks's "Dairy Book"

Emma Newport

Emma Newport is a teaching fellow in English literature at the University of Sussex. She is interested in eighteenth-century attitudes towards China and, more broadly, she researches women's positions in a network of global exchanges of ideas and objects.

## Abstract

While there are extensive records of Sir Joseph Banks's lifetime of work, the "Dairy Book" is one of the few surviving documents that chart an aspect of the intellectual life of his wife, Lady Dorothea Banks. The Dairy Book represents a record of Dorothea's interpretation of her porcelain collection, acquired through the Banks family's international network of scholars, scientists, and manufacturers. Beginning with a discussion of its unusual materiality, this article argues that the Dairy Book is distanced from the ordinary book form and is instead closer to the porcelain collection in substance: occulted, disorderly, and excessive. The Dairy Book functions as a metonym for the porcelain collection and the substance itself. This article examines porcelain and the collector's text as fictile material: a portable signifier and a repository for meanings that are shaped by the collector's selection and display. The plasticity suggested by "fictile" destabilizes understandings of how meaning is created and communicated. It frames how porcelain may be interpreted through associated practices of synecdoche, metonymy, and transposition.

The "Dairy Book" is a unique account of the extensive porcelain collection of Lady Dorothea Banks (hereafter Dorothea). Much more than a straightforward catalogue or essay, the handwritten Dairy Book was compiled by both Dorothea and her husband Sir Joseph Banks in celebration of their twenty-seven years of marriage. Yoking sentiment to academic study, the document includes private, unpublished intimacies, such as the affectionate and romantic sonnets written by Joseph to Dorothea and the frontispiece featuring a watercolour of her favourite cow "Fill Pail," in addition to a formal analysis of the porcelain collection as an aesthetic endeavour and as a source of scientific and industrial

advancement. The title “Lady Banks’s Dairy Book” is deceptive, recalling older conduct manuals such as Bartholomew Dowe’s *The Dairy Book for Housewives* (1588), which advises middle-class women on domestic labour, from dairy management to family health and child rearing. Between the title and the cow-orientated frontispiece, “Lady Banks’s Dairy Book” sets up certain expectations that its contents undermine. It avoids discussions of domestic economy or conduct; instead, it functions as a memorialization and celebration of a marriage, an aide-memoir, a catalogue for a collection, and an encyclopaedia or repository for some of the Banks family’s and others’ knowledge about China, Chinese porcelain, ancient classical pottery, and European copies. This extensive knowledge was collected through the international exchange of objects and letters between Englishmen in Britain, continental Europe, and China. While the title and frontispiece identify the text as a domestic handbook aimed at female readers, the book contains a very different kind of miscellany, one that testifies to family relations as sources of intellectual exchange.

*Family Endeavour and the Sociable Authorship of the Dairy Book*

In comparison to that of her husband—botanist, naturalist, explorer, man of letters, patron of the sciences, and president of the Royal Society—the intellectual life of Dorothea Banks has been less explored, and her archive is scattered and limited. The Kent Archives in Maidstone holds the majority of her archive, and the Dairy Book serves as the main surviving record of her intellectual pursuits. Rose Kerr initiated the rediscovery of Dorothea Banks’s reputation as a collector, and Arlene Leis has recently redressed the scholarly relationships within the Banks family, which included, in addition to Joseph and Dorothea, Joseph’s sister Sarah Sophia Banks.<sup>1</sup> Leis sets out the family’s collaborative strategies for collecting and studying materials they gathered or that were sent to them from around the world. Leis identifies the dairy as a site of sociability—a place where “remarks” pertaining to porcelain wares were exchanged—and she argues that Dorothea’s porcelain collection, the Dairy Book, and the Spring Grove villa can “enhance our understanding of the relationships between aristocratic women, the arts, patriotic consumption

1 Rose Kerr, “The Chinese Porcelain at Spring Grove Dairy: Sir Joseph Banks’s Manuscript,” *Apollo*, vol. 129, no. 323 (January 1989): 30–34; and Arlene Leis, “A Little Old-China Mad’: Lady Dorothea Banks (1758–1828) and Her Dairy at Spring Grove,” *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 40, no. 2 (2017): 199–221, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1754-0208.12410>.

and the Royal Society."<sup>2</sup> Leis also grapples with the complex materiality of the Dairy Book, suggesting it "oscillates between gift, scrapbook, guide, souvenir and essay."<sup>3</sup> Although Leis only briefly considers the Dairy Book as an object, her observation of its "oscillation" tacitly acknowledges the material mutability of the text, which is loosely bound and subject to amendment.

Two versions of the Dairy Book exist: the Kent Archives holds a complete text, which lists items from Banks's porcelain collection and includes essays, commentaries, and paintings (see Figure 1). The second copy was discovered by Francesca Hillier in 2012 in the British Museum Archives.<sup>4</sup> The complete version in Kent features a preface and four chapters: "On the Antiquity of What Is Called Old Porcelain in China," "A Digression on the Vasa Myrrhina of the Ancients," "On the Periods at Which Our Old Porcelain Has Been Imported to Europe," and "Some Opinions of the French Connoisseurs." Chapter 4 is succeeded by a description of forty-three key pieces from the collection, two sets of appendices that add eight extra sets of information, and a series of tabled images. The Kent text gives an ordered progression from one topic to the next, albeit with a number of errata and addenda. It also includes illustrations of a porcelain collection long since dispersed. The last certain record of the collection was made upon Dorothea's death in 1828, when it was willed to her nephew Edward Knatchbull, ninth baronet in Kent.<sup>5</sup> It is possible the porcelain was auctioned at Christie's on 17 May 1893; the catalogue for that auction claims the porcelain on offer had been imported by the late Joseph Banks and the lot included "old Chinese," "old Nankin," and "old Japanese" porcelain, as well as popular European manufacturers such as Minton and Sèvres. Beyond these potential traces of the collection, the accounts and depictions of it in the two versions of the Dairy Book are all that remain.

Unlike the Kent text, the British Museum version is a jumbled miscellany of assorted dates: a fragmented palimpsest of deleted, reinserted, and newly inserted information. This text includes drafts of parts of the 1807 version as well as material that was added after 1807, mostly

<sup>2</sup> Leis, 200.

<sup>3</sup> Leis, 202.

<sup>4</sup> Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre, Kent Archives U951/Z34; the British Museum has yet to catalogue their version of the text.

<sup>5</sup> Dame Dorothea Banks (Will of), National Archives, 8 July 1828, PROB11/1742, accessed 19 September 2011, <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/D185813>. See also Leis.

between 1809 and 1814, and has been stuffed into the second and third sheaves of documents. This version also contains Dorothea's additional notes, made in conjunction with Sophia and added after the Dairy Book had been completed in 1807. Both versions of the Dairy Book contain crossed-out and appended material, as well as leaves of paper with further information slipped inside. These additions result in occasionally inconsistent or absent pagination.<sup>6</sup>

Across the two texts, multiple hands are at work: in the complete version held in Kent, the bulk of the main text is in the handwriting of Banks's long-serving amanuensis, William Cartlich, with insertions, footnotes, and addenda by Joseph; in the British Museum sequence, the main handwriting belongs to Sophia, with a few additional notes by Dorothea (see Figure 2).<sup>7</sup> Leis points to the dominance of Joseph's influence in the text; however, reading both versions of the text, it is clear that the "Dairy Books" are overtly a collective family project, serving Leis's claim for collaboration between Joseph, Dorothea, and Sophia.<sup>8</sup> Despite the use of Cartlich as scribe, Sophia and Dorothea contributed to the drafting and to the later amendments made to the document. Dorothea was an active participant in the acquisition of knowledge, framing her own research questions even if she did not engage directly with the global network of male scholars. Instead, Joseph communicated her ideas and questions to significant figures across his global network of scientists, ambassadors, and explorers, including George Staunton, the Sinologist and member of the second Embassy to China; Thomas Manning, a botanist and resident in Canton; and the botanist, natural historian, and superintendent of the Honourable East India Company's Canton factory, David Lance.<sup>9</sup> Evidently, as botanists, Manning and

6 Where possible, the page numbers of the Dairy Book are provided in this essay.

7 With thanks to Neil Chambers at the Sir Joseph Banks Archive Project, Nottingham Trent University, for his graphological analysis of the Dairy Book (BM). See Figure 1 for an example of the various addenda, which themselves would be emended.

8 Leis dismisses the British Museum for what it lacks, such as the illustrations of the Kent copy, but the British Museum MS helps to communicate the production history of the Dairy Book as well as its multiple contributors.

9 George Staunton was appointed as a writer in the East India Company factory at Canton (Guangzhou) in 1798; he was the first Englishman at the factory to study Chinese. In January 1816, Staunton was promoted to chief of the Canton factory, and in July was appointed to accompany Lord Amherst's embassy to Peking. They intended to protest to the emperor about the mandarins' conduct towards the Canton merchants, but the embassy returned in January 1817 without obtaining an imperial interview. Richard Davenport-Hines, "Staunton, Sir George Thomas, second baronet (1781–1859)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press,

Lance shared Joseph Banks's interest in collecting and identifying plants from around the world.<sup>10</sup> In addition to documenting their own exchange of information, the letters between these men offer the strongest evidence of Dorothea's comprehensive interest in China and her participation in the acquisition of knowledge about porcelain.

In terms of female agency, the letters reveal a carefully mediated collaboration: propriety is prioritized to ensure the married woman did not communicate directly with her husband's connections, although Joseph Banks clearly endorses female curiosity and facilitates its satisfaction. His support for his wife's interests is evident in two major series of correspondence between 1806 and 1809, during which period the Bankses added to the Dairy Book significantly. There are clear overlaps between Dorothea's requests for information, sent in her husband's global correspondence, and the content of the Dairy Book text. For example, in his letter to the botanist Lance, who was residing in Canton at the time, Joseph advances her research on Chinese porcelain in a way that pays respect to her knowledge on the subject:

She has heard much of old china in England, but does not believe that any of it is older than Queen Elizabeth's reign, and that very little ... is old. She thinks that all dishes and plates made after the models of silver plate, as indeed is the case with the greater number, must be very modern; that is, since the English traded with Canton in 1680, when I believe the first direct ship sailed from London. She has an idea also that tea-pots, and all the tea-service, are unknown to the economy of the Chinese. Coffee-pots she is sure are so. She believes ... the Chinese use cups, not very unlike tea-cups, for their usual food ... She wishes much the same information on the subject of burnt-in china.<sup>11</sup>

2004); online, May 2015, accessed 11 April 2017, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26325>. Thomas Manning was a friend of the writer Charles Lamb; Banks acted as a patron to Manning and, upon learning of Manning's interest in Chinese literature and culture, helped secure Manning's passage on a ship to serve as doctor at a factory in Canton. Edward Smith, *The Life of Sir Joseph Banks: President of the Royal Society, with Some Notices of His Friends and Contemporaries* (London: John Lane, 1911), 269–70. David Lance's significant contribution to botany through the importation of "a large number" of Eastern plants is mentioned in *Annals of Botany*, ed. Carl Dietrich Eberhard König and John Sims (London: R. Taylor, 1805), 1:399.

10 For more on the botanical exchanges between China and Britain, see Fa-ti Fan, *British Naturalists in Qing China: Science, Empire, and Cultural Encounter* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009).

11 Joseph Banks to David Lance, quoted in Edward Smith, 272.

Dorothea engages in reasoned speculation based on her current knowledge of existing porcelain collections found in England. The letter reveals her husband's collaborative inclination, as his own opinion on the chronology of porcelain trading segues neatly with his wife's view on the modernity of the porcelain found in English collections. Her desire for information about burnt-in china likely became the source of the section on the subject in the Dairy Book:

It must have been before that time [when the English left Amoy in 1737] when the much admired blue and white China called Nankin, which is decidedly painted with European blues began to be brought to Europe and it was probably when the Chinese attempted to Establish a manufactory of China near Nankin for the convenience of the Trade of the Europeans who frequented the harbour of Amoy. The China ware called burnt-in is of this sort, the biscuit is made at Kin-te-Tschin and sent to Canton whether white or blue and white, where it is painted (37).<sup>12</sup>

The Dairy Book presents knowledge as collectively gathered and mediated through collaboration. In doing so, the text reimagines porcelain and porcelain collecting as vehicles for novel and more active narratives about collected objects and the processes by which they come to be known.

#### *The Scientia of Porcelain and Sites of Knowledge*

In eighteenth-century British culture, porcelain was more typically associated with cleanliness, purity, and the fragility of women's chastity. As the Dairy Book notes, "no Ware is so well adapted to the purposes of domestic economy as Porcelain ... it combines elegance of colour with the most perfect cleanliness ... Its surface is such that no kind of filth can adhere to it" (33). In contrast to writers such as Alexander Pope, who famously warned of when "rich China Vessels fal'n from high, / In glittering Dust and painted Fragments lie," the Dairy Book does not represent porcelain as a metaphor for female chastity.<sup>13</sup> Instead, it expands this familiar and

12 Quotations are from the version of the Dairy Book held in the Kent Archives, unless otherwise indicated by (BM), a notation indicating the version at the British Museum.

13 Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock: An Heroi-comical Poem, in Five Cantos* (London: Bernard Lintott, 1714), 28, lines 157–60. See also Aubrey Williams, "The 'Fall' of China and The Rape of the Lock," *Philological Quarterly* 41 (1962): 412–25. On Pope's *Belinda* as a consumer and a commodity, and porcelain as a metaphor for chastity, see Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace, "Women, China, and Consumer Culture in Eighteenth-Century England," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29, no. 2 (1995/96): 153–67, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ecs.1996.0009>. See also Julie Park, *The Self & It*:



narrow alignment of porcelain with particular categories of femininity, inviting a new reading of porcelain as both substance and metaphor.

Collecting porcelain in a dairy was a fashionable practice derived from a narrative of ideal female behaviour associated with the family dairy. As Meredith Martin argues, elite women's identification with the dairy as "a site of exemplary hygiene, temperance, and feminine productivity" posited the ornamental dairy as an "architectural surrogate" for the woman herself.<sup>14</sup> Yet the porcelain collection does not offer a singular expression of ideal elite female behaviour; rather, it generates plural material fictions about the porcelain's origins, about the collector, and about more abstract concepts of nation and patriotism.<sup>15</sup> Porcelain displays like the Banks's were designed to carry what Mimi Hellman describes as "conversational potential."<sup>16</sup> Not only did they prompt sociable conversation among viewers, but they did so through carefully chosen arrangements that put pieces in conversation with one another in stimulating ways.

Rather than focus on the fixity of porcelain as a substance, attending to the fictility of porcelain—its interpretive malleability and its way of generating narratives—helps us understand how it acts as a more complex, less stable metonym for women's participation in exercises of consumption, taste, and the production of knowledge. In the Dairy Book, female collecting is a demonstration not only of feminine virtuosity in

*Novel Objects in Eighteenth-Century England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); and Stacey Sloboda, "Porcelain Bodies: Gender, Acquisitiveness, and Taste in Eighteenth-Century England," *Material Cultures 1740–1920: The Meanings and Pleasures of Collecting*, ed. John Potvin and Alla Myzelev (Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 19–36. Park emphasizes the possibility of eighteenth-century objects' role in articulating the self, while Sloboda explores the signification of porcelain as a metaphor for female chastity, virtuosity, and taste, as well as one of loss and fragmentation through the image of shattered porcelain.


14 Meredith Martin, "Interiors and Interiority in the Ornamental Dairy Tradition," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 20, no. 3 (2008): 358, <https://doi.org/10.3138/ecf.20.3.357>. See also Martin, *Dairy Queens: The Politics of Pastoral Architecture from Catherine De Medici to Marie Antoinette* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

15 See Stacey Pierson, *From Object to Concept: Global Consumption and the Transformation of Ming Porcelain* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013); Eugenia Zuroski Jenkins, "'Nature to Advantage Drest': Chinoiserie, Aesthetic Form, and the Poetry of Subjectivity in Pope and Swift," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 43, no. 1 (2009): 75–94, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ecs.0.0092>; and Barbara M. Benedict, "Saying Things: Collecting Conflicts in Eighteenth-Century Object Literatures," *Literature Compass* 3, no. 4 (2006): 689–719, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-4113.2006.00356.x>.

16 Mimi Hellman, "The Nature of Artifice: French Porcelain Flowers and the Rhetoric of Garnish," in *Cultural Aesthetics of Porcelain*, ed. Alden Cavanaugh and Michael E. Yonan (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 51.



selection and display of objects, but also of female patriotic virtue, to the extent that they curate the nation's possessions:

Mr Spalding's taste for collecting [porcelain at Blenheim] and the whim of ornamenting Dairies with it which the Ladies have lately adopted ... prevent[ed] the whole stock of it [being] entirely broken and destroyed before it as again call'd into notice. The hoards of every old and opulent Family are ... yet stored with this elegant article & If the fashion of fitting up Dairies continues, an immense mass of admirable Chinese Manufacture will be brought back again into sight, which would *otherwise have lain dormant and absolutely useless* in the Closets of the Country Houses of our Nobility and Gentry. (5–6)<sup>17</sup> 

Despite the reference to ladies' collecting as a "whim," the Dairy Book reveals how displays of porcelain facilitate an interplay between female sociability and the male homosociality of *scientia*.<sup>18</sup> Joseph Banks wrote to an associate that what he knew of Chinese porcelain, he had learned "in my wife's dairy where a collection of China and Japan not easily to be rivalled is continually under my observation."<sup>19</sup> He credits his wife with facilitating this practice of observation: "To each Collectress ... the task of arranging her own Cabinet must devolve ... as female genius is in all cases more lively, more active and endowed with far more of resource in cases of difficulty than men ever attain" (39). Although he attributes to her a firmly gendered set of skills, this description nonetheless departs from depictions of women's collecting as thoughtless and frivolous.

17 In 1793, Oxford curate Samuel Smith Spalding presented his porcelain collection to the fourth Duchess of Marlborough in return for accommodation as curator of the collection. Spalding wrote to the Duchess to offer his thirty-six chests of "Ancient China." At Blenheim Palace, the Home Lodge is sometimes called China Corner because in 1796 a cruciform china gallery was built to display this porcelain. See A.P. Baggs, W.J. Blair, Eleanor Chance, Christina Colvin, Janet Cooper, C.J. Day, Nesta Selwyn, and S.C. Townley, "Blenheim: Park from 1705," *A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 12, Wootton Hundred (South) Including Woodstock*, ed. Alan Crossley and C.R. Elrington (London: Victoria County History, 1990), 460–70; *British History Online*, accessed 10 July 2017, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/oxon/vol12/pp460-470>; and Jeri Bapasola, *Mr. Spalding's Gift: The Oriental Porcelain Collection at Blenheim Palace* (Lydney: Lightmoor Press, 2003).

18 See Leis, esp. 216–18.

19 Joseph Banks to Lewis Weston Dilwyn, 9 October 1814, London, in British Museum [Natural History] MS Banks correspondence in the Department of Botany, DTC 19.83–45. In 1814, Joseph Banks wrote to the porcelain manufacturer, botanist, and conchologist Lewis Dillwyn to inform him that he had read Dillwyn's account of his visit to Natgaren and the China manufacture, and he wished to engage in a discussion of its history and composition.

If, as Julie Park argues, in the eighteenth century "artefacts ... mirrored and symbolised the self [and] also became identifiable as the self,"<sup>20</sup> then the porcelain collection represents the bringing together of a range of selves—curator, collector, connoisseur, genius, patriot, and labourer—that were available to both women and men. The Dairy Book's formal documentation of the history of the porcelain trade, its meticulous classification of porcelain, and its employment of a formal scribe imply that it could have been intended for circulation among members of the Banks' intellectual circles, which included porcelain manufacturers such as Joseph Wedgwood. The carefully referenced source material, using standardized abbreviations, allows the reader to cross-reference or research further points taken from available studies on China, including those by Harris, Le Comte, Du Halde, and Amiot.<sup>21</sup> The Dairy Book also contains "Observations made in the year 1775 on the Duchess of Portland's Collection of Old China by Whang Atong, a Chinese."<sup>22</sup> Whang Atong analyzes the characters on the porcelain, giving a system of dating the objects in the collection: a chronological logging of the Chinese characters representing successive Emperors from Shing Fan in 1459 to "Kaane Luung," the contemporary Emperor.<sup>23</sup> The interpolation of Atong's writing acts as evidence of Dorothea's scholarship, but also



20 Park, xii–xiii.

21 John Harris, *Navigantium Atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca; Or, A Compleat Collection of Voyages and Travels: Consisting of above Four Hundred of the Most Authentick Writers* (London, 1705). Louis Le Comte, *Memoirs and Observations, Topographical, Physical, Mathematical, Mechanical, Natural, Civil, and Ecclesiastical, Made in a Late Journey through the Empire of China* (London, 1697). Jean-Baptiste Du Halde, *The General History of China* (London, 1736). Amiot, contributions in *Mémoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences et les arts des Chinois*, 15 vols. (Paris, 1776–91).

22 Whang Atong visited England as a young man and became known in London: Joshua Reynolds painted his portrait, and he corresponded with Banks, William Jones, and others. In a letter to Jones, dated 10 December 1784, from Canton, Atong writes: "I remember the pleasure of dining with you in company with Capt. Blake and Sir Joshua Reynolds; and I shall always remember the kindness of my friends in England." *Asiatick Researches* (1790), quoted in T.C. Fan, "Sir William Jones's Chinese Studies," *Review of English Studies* 22, no. 88 (October 1946): 308, <https://doi.org/10.1093/res/os-XXII.88.304>.

23 The transcription of the name "Kaane Luung" demonstrates the disparity in pronunciation between the Chinese transcription and the English efforts in transcribing the name as Qian Long and, more commonly, Kien Lung or Long; however, the Dairy Book does not alter its use of Kien Long. This repeated use does, rather disappointingly, suggest that Whang Atong's contribution to knowledge production was a passive one: here, information has been collected but not applied, thus implying a hierarchy among international connections that privileges European experience and knowledge of China.

highlights her cosmopolitan aristocratic connections. Some years later, Whang Atong wrote from China to inform Joseph that an associate was bringing a set of books on the history of China, some tea and Nankeen flowers as a gift for the botanist and his wife.

In contrast to the relative traceability of the contributors to the Dairy Book, the text's circulation and readership remains difficult to establish. The Kent version of the text assists the independent reader-researcher who is unfamiliar with the porcelain pieces being described; the accompanying pen and ink drawings depict what Dorothea considered collection highlights. Some parts of the text were more widely published: in 1807, Stephen Weston published *A Specimen of Poetry Inscribed upon a Cup Belonging to Lady Banks* (1807), which was dedicated to her.<sup>24</sup> However, when Joseph Banks wrote about aspects of the porcelain collection that were intended for a specific audience, such as the Royal family, copies were added to the British Museum's Dairy Book but were not published, indicating a limited, intimate readership. John Barrow, the Sinologist and member of the Amherst Embassy to China in 1817, is probably referring to the Dairy Book when he mentions that Joseph Banks left among his papers "a curious, interesting, and well-written history and art of the manufacture of porcelain by the Chinese."<sup>25</sup> Barrow's comments reveal that he regards the work as a coherent source of authority; he recognizes its epistemological contribution.

At the same time as it offers some semblance of a straightforward, "well-written history," the Dairy Book grapples through its unusual material form with the less straightforward problem of porcelain's tendency towards fiction—something made, but for indeterminate purposes. Bill Brown argues that the object, when "released from the bond of being equipment ... becomes something else."<sup>26</sup> The British Museum's Dairy

24 Stephen Weston (1747–1830) was a noted linguist who examined, unsuccessfully, the Rosetta Stone; he was also a translator of Chinese poetry. Weston corresponded with Dorothea on the nature of language and script, revealing a more direct relationship between them than is shown in the mediated correspondence by Joseph Banks with Manning and Lance. For examples of Weston's translation work, see *Ly Tang, an Imperial Poem, in Chinese, by Kien Lung, with a Translation and Notes by Stephen Weston* (London: C. & R. Baldwin, 1809).

25 John Barrow, quoted in Edward Smith, 271. Smith comments that "doubtless this MS. is still in existence, hoarded by a Collector of another sort, and it would repay examination." Smith adopts the same language of hoarding used in the Dairy Book to critique a particular type of self-serving, rather than nation- or industry-serving collector.

26 Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Inquiry* 28, no. 1 (2001): 1–2, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1344258>.

Book—already not a proper “dairy book” in aim and content—literally and figuratively is released from the bond, or binding, of being a book at all and becomes something else that is hard to determine. The fiction of stability in the attempted order of the text reveals what Luisa Calè, describing extra-illustrated books, calls “unstable repositories in a dynamic order of things.”<sup>27</sup> Both Dairy Books are mutable and defined by the possibility—and actuality—of acts of transposition: errors are scored out, new information is inserted, and associated materials are gathered around. In this way, the texts—particularly the loosely bound British Museum version—are as plastic, or fictile, as the porcelain collection itself. The Dairy Book may thus be included among, in the words of Calè and Adriana Craciun, “more undisciplined exploratory modes such as the essay, the aphorism, and the anecdote—forms which shun linear connections or exhibit the vagaries of consequential thinking.”<sup>28</sup>

#### *Making Porcelain's Meaning*

Of the metaphoric potential of porcelain, Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace observes that “the properties of porcelain allow us to meditate on yet another ‘fictile’ process, namely the process by which a society comes to terms with the meaning of commodity culture.”<sup>29</sup> Part of this process is reckoning with objects’ capacity to sustain fictions: porcelain stories both conceal and reveal frauds, forgeries, and fakes; invite the fabrication of tales of origin; and lead to innocent or wilful misreading of the porcelain’s substance or surface. This is not a simple matter of truth versus falsity, but an effect of the porcelain object’s variability of meaning depending on context and rearrangement. Placing porcelain pieces alongside one another permits a variety of comparative interpretations—for example, of antiquity and type:

This Jar, the Journey set and the Green Bottle and Triangular Cups have a general similarity in stile to each other and are all widely different from the elegant Porcelain of the Dynasty of Ming besides these pieces sound when struck, the sound they yield does not ring or continue like that of Porcelain—from all these circumstances ... tho they are somewhat superior in their Biscuit to the ancient Pottery of China now in so high estimation,

27 Luisa Calè, “Gray’s Ode and Walpole’s China Tub: The Order of the Book and The Paper Lives of an Object,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 45, no. 1 (2011): 106.

28 Luisa Calè and Adriana Craciun, “The Disorder of Things,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 45, no. 1 (2011): 1, <https://doi.org/10.1353/ecs.2011.0036>.

29 Kowaleski Wallace, 166.

they are ... still more inferior to the beautiful Porcelain of the Dynasty of Ming, and therefore probably been made ... before the year 1300. (59)

This method of comparison sets individual pieces against one another to create lively visual and aural communications of the taxonomy of porcelain. When struck, the porcelain speaks between past and present, animated in and by the hands of the collector. The porcelain jar thus “speaks” to the connoisseur and narrates its own age and venerability. The cup or jar as narrator of its own story recalls the Chinese trope of the Jiǎngpén (講盆), or the speaking bowl, which was first recorded in thirteenth-century Chinese literature from the tales of Judge Bao.<sup>30</sup>

The speaking bowl is an effective critical framework for describing the fictility of porcelain; likewise, the ways in which the alignment of Chinese characters can form and alter meaning parallels the structuring of the porcelain collection which can be re-presented in different arrangements to generate new meanings. For example, pén (盆), a basin, pot, or bowl, becomes jùbǎopén (聚寶盆) and could, in this arrangement, newly mean a literal goldmine, a figurative source of wealth, a mythological treasure bowl, or the concept of cornucopia. The porcelain object operates within similar rules of syntax, resonating differently depending on how it is situated and how it is being heard.

The Dairy Book, the bowl, and the collection of porcelain all represent, on some level, a principle of order and containment, while they are also sources of interpretative possibility and potential meaning that can, theoretically, be understood through cross-comparison: the Dairy Book can be understood better through cross-references to other books about China; the bowl can derive meaning through its composite name and through its comparison with other bowls; the collection is a basis for creating a “taxonomy of porcelain.” On the one hand, the Dairy Book can fix epistemological arrangements that unite objects distanced by time or place by drawing comparisons between Dorothea’s collection and others; on the other hand, the fixing of such arrangements diminishes the porcelain’s capacity for endless re-narration through new juxtapositions and

30 Wilt L. Idema, “Rescriptor Bao Decides the Case of the Weird Black Pot,” in *Judge Bao and the Rule of Law: Eight Ballad-Stories from the Period 1250–1450* (Singapore: World Scientific, 2010), xiv. The first European translations of the legend of Bao did not appear until 1832, when the tale of the Chalk Circle, “*Huilan ji*,” was translated into French by Stanislas Julien. *Hoei-lan-ki, ou l’Histoire du cercle du craic: Drame en prose et en vers*, trans. Stanislas Julien (London: Oriental Translation Fund, 1832).

points of contrast. An example of this tension emerges in the "Notices and conjectures on some of the more remarkable pieces in Lady Banks's Dairy," which lists forty numbered pieces arranged neither chronologically, nor by size, type, or origin; instead, examples are given of the most expensive, the different forms (crackle, pierced or "fillagree," black, white, and so on; these are listed as numbers 5–9, 14, 21, 25–27), those purchased from another English collector or imported, the biggest (the Great Cisterns, number 4), and the oldest (numbered in the Dairy Book as 2, 17, 25). In "Table 3," "Figure 1" is listed as "The Idol Vitex or Ninifo, taken from Ogilby's China, p582" (see Figures 3 and 5).<sup>31</sup> Beneath this image is "Figure 2": "The Idol Ninifo reposing. From a figure of Porcelain in Lady Banks's Dairy" (57) (see Figure 4). The comparison is repeated with two new idols in table 4. The descriptions attached to tables 3 and 4 state: "This idol is ... the Personification of sensual pleasures, his fatness and the delight expressed in his countenance exhibit him as in the full enjoyment of all the gratifications of voluptuousness. He is the principal figure in the Plate of a Formosan Temple in Ogilby's Atlas. [In] comparison with the other Idols his figure must be of a vast size ... Lady Banks has several Images of this Divinity in her Dairy" (58) (see Figure 5).

While the figure of Ninifo ushers in a fiction of luxuriance, this meaning is countered by the rhetoric of dry curatorial analysis, which the proliferation of examples facilitates. By placing the figure on a curatorial platform, the text invites the reader not to revere the idol but to scrutinize it as an object of technical, sociocultural, and historical interest. Ninifo is made to represent a much broader, if inaccurate, category of "idols,"<sup>32</sup> which itself serves as a synecdoche for a particular fiction of China. There exists an inexorable tension between excess and control, in which the act of collecting material china becomes a way of subduing the vastness and heterogeneity of this "voluptuous" Chineseness. Counterintuitively, possessing many pieces of porcelain in this context serves to demystify and normalize the "images" rather than participate in their illicit fecundity.

31 See Johann Nieuhoff, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperor of China ... Englished and Set Forth with Their Several Sculptures by John Ogilby* (London: John Macock, 1669). See Figure 4.

32 Ninifo is the laughing Buddha, or Maitreya Buddha, who represents prosperity in all its forms. There are nuances in the types of good fortune and prosperity, depending on the position of the idol and the substance from which it is made. The Buddha figure demonstrates another type of fiction about China that the Dairy Book presents as truth. See also Joseph J.F. Chen, *Maitreya Buddha in I-Kuan Tao* (Bloomington: Author House, 2014).

This act of containment within curatorial expertise is attributed to female collecting habits: Dorothea's amassing of multiple pieces of porcelain is not an instance of female excess, but an act of regulation. The Dairy Book identifies collecting as a rigorous practice. Though Joseph Banks's voice is prominent, his language emphasizes Dorothea's cultural agency, particularly in her role as an arbiter of taxonomy. He extends this acknowledgement "To the Ladies of England ... [who] at a time when the beauties of China ware were more studied than at present because the price grows incomparably dearer, attempted a kind of partial classification and succeed in distinguishing some sorts from rest; the connoisseur and the china dealers of the present time, have not quite forgot the names they used, a catalogue of as many of them as could be recovered is therefore annexed in the appendix" (38). In its emphasis on the contribution women made to the classification of porcelain, Joseph Banks's representation of female collectors runs counter to the familiar social discourse that female consumption, and in particular china collecting, was representative of excess, fecklessness, and financial imprudence.<sup>33</sup>

Eschewing this narrative, the Dairy Book promotes female collecting as a talent that serves the national good:

Can then the Collection and Exhibition of Old China be considered as a trifling disinteresting amusement, or shall the Ladies who employ themselves in searching it out and setting it off to the advantage of Female Taste, always allowed to be superior to that of the Other sex, be considered as Patriots labouring for the advantage of their country; the forms of Vessels may be communicated to the Manufacturers by engravings but the pure white, the beautiful colours and the semi-transparent brilliance of the glaze of China Ware can only be studied from the originals themselves, which Ladies best know how to arrange with taste and exhibit to advantage? (8)

These conversant pieces are brought to life by female skills. While it evokes a typically gendered understanding of female roles in sociability,<sup>34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> This type of feckless collector is depicted, for example, in Oliver Goldsmith's character of "the lady of distinction" in *The Citizen of the World*, herself "a little shrivelled figure indolently reclined on a sofa." Goldsmith, *The Citizen of the World* (1760), in *The Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith*, ed. Arthur Friedman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 2:68.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Jon Mee, who notes David Hume's suggestion that women might aspire to be "the Sovereigns of the Empire of Conversation"; Mee concludes that women's participation in eighteenth-century conversation was understood as either an "index of the progress of civility" or a dangerous "decline into effeminacy." Mee,



this passage also identifies women's collecting as a practice founded on industriousness and fuelling innovation. Porcelain collecting extends beyond a straightforward reflection of wealth, prestige, and gratuitous knowledge. Rather than supplying mere "conversation pieces," female collectors are agents of progress and patriotism. The idea of "labouring" rescues female consumption from narratives of the frivolous and deleterious, integrating it into a narrative of utility and productivity.

Women are, according to the Dairy Book, seekers and creators of meaning, which they form through curated displays of objects. This meaning is prolific and proliferating, however: porcelain tells many stories. Dorothea's strategies for interpreting the porcelain object's composite meanings are evident in Joseph Banks's correspondence with Staunton:

Lady Banks returns her best thanks for his gift and is delighted with the modern china ware; she believed the art was lost and had no idea such ware could be made; with the china-ware of the Duchess of Portland, by which they have learned to recognise from the marks the time and place of manufacture; asks for information about the Dynasties and ware characters of each; and as to the prices which the old China fetches, there is a tradition that the great Duchess of Marlborough paid £1500 for 3 jars and 2 beakers; asks also about the uses to which the various kinds of vessels were put.<sup>35</sup>

Dorothea seeks the vessel's contextual history and an understanding of porcelain's utility, while also conferring status upon her own collecting habits through reference to the Duchess of Marlborough. The mark alone, while decipherable, especially with Whang Atong's key, communicates but one small part of the story. Porcelain is both a repository for and a carrier of multiple narratives: the marks that Dorothea has learned to identify are merely one of the fragments of information from which connoisseurs of porcelain must weave explanatory fictions.

#### *Heterogeneity, Illegitimacy, and Fictility*

The challenge of bringing order to the disparate and heterogeneous collection is a subject to which the Dairy Book returns repeatedly: "All

*Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 10.

<sup>35</sup> Joseph Banks to George Staunton, March 1807, London, in *The Royal Society, miscellaneous autograph letters and papers*, RS Misc MSS 6.28 DTC 17.35-38 (March 1807). The Dairy Book does not refer to the epistolary assistance Staunton gave and only references Kampf, Du Halde, and Amiot.

attempts at a complete arrangement of so multifarious and so immense a mass as heterogeneous and unconnected in its part as nature is regular and exact, would be as hopeless a task as to enumerate the stars visible in Herschel's telescope, or to count the grains of sand that are scattered on the shores of the sea" (38). The metaphors conjure images of the infinite and the shifting, the dynamic and distant. Despite the professed impossibility of categorization, the tenth appendix attempts a "List of some of the Names which the Connoisseurs have given to the different kinds of Old Porcelain," with the additional comment that "Lady Banks has attempted to introduce a general kind of classification into her Dairy and has ... succeeded beyond her expectation but how far it may be usefull [*sic*] to others is a matter of doubt, no Collectress can possess more than very few sorts of the multitude ... sent forth, every collection therefore will have pieces distinct and easily distinguishable from all others" (39). If dominion is to be achieved over this morass of porcelain, women have a defined—even leading—role in any triumph. Metaphors of marshalling and control are extended in Dorothea's label of "Illegitimate or bastard" porcelain. Anomalies, shards, and forgeries, as well as those pieces that opposed her taste, helped construct a narrative of perfection by contrast with the imperfect, and therefore had to be materially included in, though categorically excluded from, the collection. Retention of irregularity within the collection acted as a major method of measuring authenticity.

Learning to make these distinctions was a way to refine amateur delight into connoisseurship. As the Dairy Book states, "By comparison of these decisive pieces with uncertain ones, a good judgement may easily be formed" (65). The defective porcelain is a shadow collection, whose function is to illustrate the disparity between the authentic and the inauthentic. It is hidden from the uninitiated eye, to protect the observer—who may be too readily swayed by what "[Dorothea] calls illegitimate or bastard China ... [which is] formed and painted according to the fancy of the Europeans, or what the Chinese think most likely to suit their taste ... the Painting very gaudy [but] ill-executed" (37–38). Language more commonly associated with female sexual transgression—illegitimacy and bastardy—is appropriated to condemn European forgeries: the suggestion of female impropriety is displaced by the call for female connoisseurship to discipline the wayward objects.<sup>36</sup>

36 Christine A. Jones addresses the French cultural anxiety about frauds, arguing that, although "buyers and sellers fought vigilantly to detect fakes that ... threatened to undermine the principle of authenticity upon which object commerce was based,"

Dorothea named as "illegitimate" the European ware or the cheaper, less valuable Japanese porcelain that was misrepresented as Chinese and sold for a higher value: "The Dutch who then traded to Japon, had their Japon Porcelain to bring into the European Market in competition with Portuguese China, it was then no doubt that they resort to the trick of placing the Name of a Chinese Emperor under a piece of Japon ware, *of which forgery Lady Banks has specimens in her Dairy*" (37; emphasis added). Here, the porcelain serves as a synecdoche for a British imperial challenge in which female acquisition has helped to establish control over and subjugation of foreign goods. The fictility of porcelain lies additionally in its potential for fraudulent renaming: the marks that require deciphering cannot be read in isolation, and those marks carry the possibility of having been falsified by Dutch, Portuguese, or French merchants or porcelain manufacturers. A composite reading of substance, shape, shine, and colour must be given in conjunction with the deciphering of the mark. The female collector as knowledgeable connoisseur can thus participate in the protection of the British economy against worthless imports. Questionable authenticity and practices in fraudulence and fakery concerns Dorothea greatly, since she believed that a European fantasy, a fictional version of true Chinese porcelain, was being imported under false pretences: "The Figures of Flowers impressed into [the porcelain] in *vivid colours*, which bear evident testimony of an European original ... The *imaginary beauty of their forms*, the *brilliancy of the colors* or any other of their fashionable qualifications may be esteemed ... They certainly possess no part of the value derived from being made in good times as all Old China was, or from the excellent and inimitable materials of which good old China is always composed, they cannot therefore with propriety be admitted in a collection of old China" (40). "Imaginary beauty" censures European fictions of Chinese porcelain that are divorced from authentic origins. The Dutch and French East India Companies were Britain's—and the British East India Company's—major competitors for wealth, trade agreements, and territory in the region.<sup>37</sup> Access to Chinese and Japanese ware became a symbol of trading power as well as a source of real

French artisans at Saint-Cloud deliberately and "brazenly introduced artificiality, ultimately buffering themselves from the charge of fraud and reversing the hierarchy of marvel" between the natural and the artificial and between ancient Chinese ware and modern French innovation. Jones, *Shapely Bodies: The Image of Porcelain in Eighteenth-Century France* (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2013), 110.

37 See *The Worlds of the East India Company*, ed. H.V. Bowen, Margarette Lincoln, and Nigel Rigby (London: Boydell Press, 2002).

wealth: once the British position in China was strengthened by a move to Canton in 1700, consumer culture underwent a dramatic change as goods from around the globe began arriving in ever greater quantities. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, imports from the East Indies totalled £775,000, and by the end of the century, £5,785,000 worth of goods were imported to Britain from that region, making it the second greatest supplier to the British market in 1798.<sup>38</sup> This fiscal promise was under continual threat from the French, Portuguese, and, in particular, the Dutch, and thus the Dairy Book conflates the porcelain trade with a wider imperial rivalry. The comment on European forgeries reveals that it is not the trade deficit that threatens Britain, but the market's vulnerability to fraudulent activity.

The Dairy Book identifies the fragility and illegitimacy of these European efforts through an analysis of the fraudulent pieces of porcelain they traded.<sup>39</sup> In giving an account of France's cultural anxiety about porcelain, Christine A. Jones identifies the substance as a "fragile paradigm" that attempted to align "Chinese wisdom with foreignness and tradition and French ingenuity with modern science and the future ... [but could also imperil] France's equally unstable claim to supremacy through novelty."<sup>40</sup> The Dairy Book exposes this fragility and offers a robust challenge to French superiority in porcelain manufacturing. A keen, cultivated, and knowledgeable British eye, whether male or female,

38 Phyllis Deane and W.A. Cole, *British Economic Growth 1688–1959* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 87. Maxine Berg notes that the most popular imported products shifted from textiles and porcelain to tea and coffee. In 1777–78, eight vessels returned carrying 345 tons of porcelain: still a significant amount, but representing a smaller proportion of total imports. Berg gives an overview of the change in the British economy and the rise in consumer power and the luxury good as a result of economic surplus, particularly discussing Asiatic influences on consumer behaviour. Berg, "Asian Luxuries and the Making of the European Consumer Revolution," in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, ed. Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 56.

39 Duplicitousness was not limited to mainland Europeans: when Macartney considered a little industrial espionage during his embassy to China, it was to Joseph Banks that he wrote. Banks in turn wrote to Josiah Wedgwood, the porcelain manufacturer, to recount that "Ld. Macartney has suggested the propriety of taking under the appearance of a servant a Person well Skill'd in all the mysteries of Pottery who may ... acquaint himself with any mode of manufacture us'd by the Chinese which the artists of this Country are ignorant of ... As the whole is kept secret, I must also request that you will not tell of it. All who really know it, speak of it with doubt." Joseph Banks to Josiah Wedgwood, 6 February 1792, in *Scientific Correspondence of Sir Joseph Banks: 1765–1820*, ed. Neil Chambers (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2007), 3:142.

40 Jones, 147.

could detect real from fake, reinforcing a nationalistic vision of British cunning in the face of continental fraud, incompetence, and lack of taste.

Dorothea is represented in the Dairy Book as strategic on this front: regarding illegitimate porcelain, "of this Lady Banks possesses very little not more than is necessary of explaining its defects, most of it is hid in a large China Cistern where it cannot be seen till it is lifted out" (71). The illegitimate and gaudy pieces of forged porcelain are not admired or treasured like the authentic Chinese pieces but are jailed as examples to British observers of the infiltration of the nation's collections by foreign imposters. "Illegitimate" china is not proper china; neither is it, by extension, proper China: it is both physically and figuratively inauthentic.

Porcelain forever teeters on the brink of worthlessness: once identified as inauthentic, or once broken, the most invaluable samples of porcelain disintegrate into worthless scraps. Significantly, Dorothea chose to keep broken pieces: "Her pierced cup of fillagree China would if it were whole be beyond all price as well as on account of the open work and of the Chinese Letter cut on each compartment, in its present state however it offers an admirable specimen of Chinese Art, as every ornament broken off is repeated in the parts that remain whole" (72). Yet the fictile nature of porcelain as a substance means it can literally be remade from a worthless state. Popular glazes for porcelain, such as those used at the Sèvres manufactory, often "consisted of quartz or sand, chalk, and fragments of broken porcelain, ground to an impalpable powder."<sup>41</sup> Broken pieces could be recycled into new glazes and thereby restore economic and cultural value. The Dairy Book, too, put imperfections to work in the production of value, often highlighting the Banks family's failures of knowledge and understanding. These failures and alterations reveal the difficulty of securing histories, translating marks, and interpreting the images, and so bolster the value of the connoisseurship that Dorothea had cultivated.

Dorothea did expunge certain pieces she deemed too far departed from the authentic: for example, "Lady Banks ... so entirely gives up [the] authenticity [of two cups depicting Dragons with five claws] that she has banished them out of her dairy" (36). In the same way, the Dairy Book contains passages that are scored out, with neat lines eliminating old ideas and previous thoughts. A short extract written by Joseph Banks on the subject of Gallic cups is crossed out: someone, probably Joseph, deleted the speculation that it "may be the case" that the Gallic

41 E.S. Auscher, and William Burton, *A History and Description of French Porcelain* (London: Cassell, 1905), 88.

cup “was of the same ware” as a British-owned piece (n.p.). This double banishment, from text and from collection, reveals a determined resistance to inauthentic pieces that could not be made to serve a purpose.


Such acts of purging are not part of an attempt to present the collector’s knowledge as without imperfection: the text confesses where the combined Banks knowledge founders. The miscellaneous nature of the texts reflects the instability of knowledge about porcelain, which shifts and alters as the commonplace book expands. The Banks family collected tools for interpretation, such as Chinese cipher keys, but the two texts’ evolutionary creation means that the confidence of earlier work is tempered with the growing realization, as the collection increases, of the vastness and complexity of china and China as objects of knowledge. The Banks family recognizes the complexity of porcelain’s history and manufacture, and the challenge of laying claim to expertise on it, as well as the complexity of narratives of China imported via porcelain objects. In a tranche of exchanges in 1809, Banks “returns thanks [to John Reeves] for the manuscript he has kindly composed and sent him” as “no one in Europe could have given him the information it contains; it is extremely interesting and enlarges the sphere of Dorothea’s amusement.”<sup>42</sup> As Reeves and Banks continued their exchanges, Reeves’s knowledge began to founder when confronted with the enormity of Chinese manufacture and the fictile properties of porcelain: Reeves found it “difficult” to answer Banks’s queries about the figures on chinaware as he described how the designs changed every year.<sup>43</sup> Knowledge contracts as the seemingly stable meanings associated with porcelain are destabilized through proliferation. Such realizations resulted in a growing awareness of the paucity of what had previously appeared to be a fulsome record of the porcelain and the triumphs of women collectors. As the Dairy Book announces,

42 Joseph Banks to John Reeves, 12 July 1809, in miscellaneous autograph letters and papers, London, The Royal Society (RS) Misc MSS 6.28 DTC 17.311 (12 July 1809). Reeves was a botanist who lived in Canton, whose work has been gathered in The Reeves Collection of Chinese botanical drawings held at the RHS Lindley Library. The manuscript and books that Reeves sent could be those held in the Kent Archives (U951/Z37/1-3). The beautifully illustrated Chinese texts describe quotidian life in China: detailed, intricate line drawings of about 20cm in diameter depict domestic scenes such as cooking, washing, weaving, and planting, similar to scenes typically cast on wallpaper. See Kate Bailey, “The Reeves Collection of Chinese Botanical Drawings,” *Plantsman* 9 (December 2010): 218–25, <https://www.rhs.org.uk/about-the-rhs/publications/magazines/the-plantsman/2010-issues/december/chinese-botanical-drawings.pdf>; and Fa-ti Fan, 43–58.

43 John Reeves to Joseph Banks, 27 December 1812, London, in National Archives, Joseph Banks Research Project, BM Add MS 33982 56-67, DTC 19 4-6.

"It will be evident from the foregoing pages that we know but little of the history of Chinese porcelain, of that of Japan we know still less" (5). Despite the profusion of meanings that the Dairy Book creates from the porcelain collection, as a repository of knowledge it remains, ultimately, rather empty.



Much as porcelain is a composite substance, the porcelain collection is composed from disparate sources; the Dairy Book echoes this practice in its composition. A farrago of material is interspersed with orderly references to other works that  multiply and compound the sources of knowledge. The difficulty of following the resulting web of information is the Dairy Book's most significant illumination of collected porcelain as an object of knowledge. The reader's struggle recalls the Banks family's struggle to distinguish, catalogue, and interpret the physical porcelain collection. The material object's history of having been physically moulded of fictile clay is reproduced in porcelain's ongoing plasticity of meaning as a cultural object. The Dairy Book regards porcelain as a vessel of communication between broken and whole; hidden and seen; past and present; disorderly stories and scientific taxonomies; fantasy and truth; Orient and Occident—yet these polarities are never reconciled, they are only reworked.





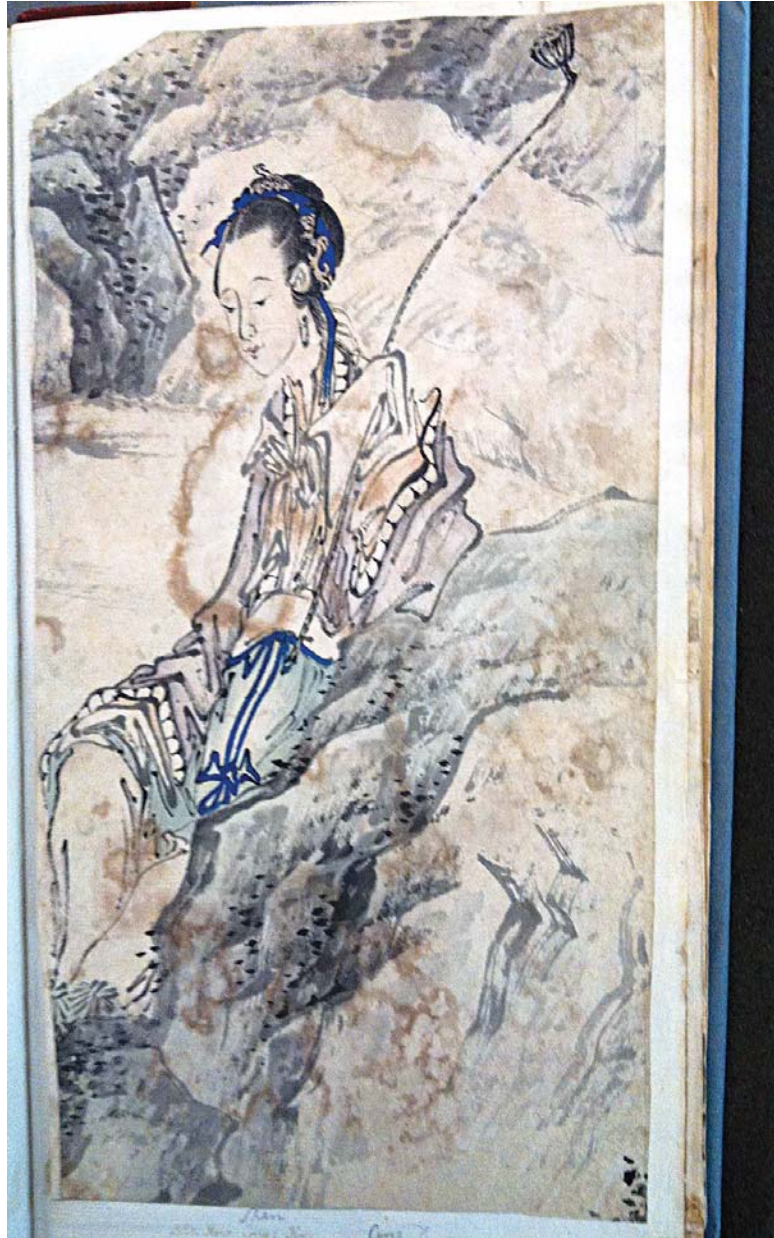


Figure 1. *The Journey to Peking*, watercolour, Lady Dorothea Banks's Dairy Book, MSS Knatchbull Papers, n.p. (U951/Z34) Courtesy of Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone. Reproduced by permission.

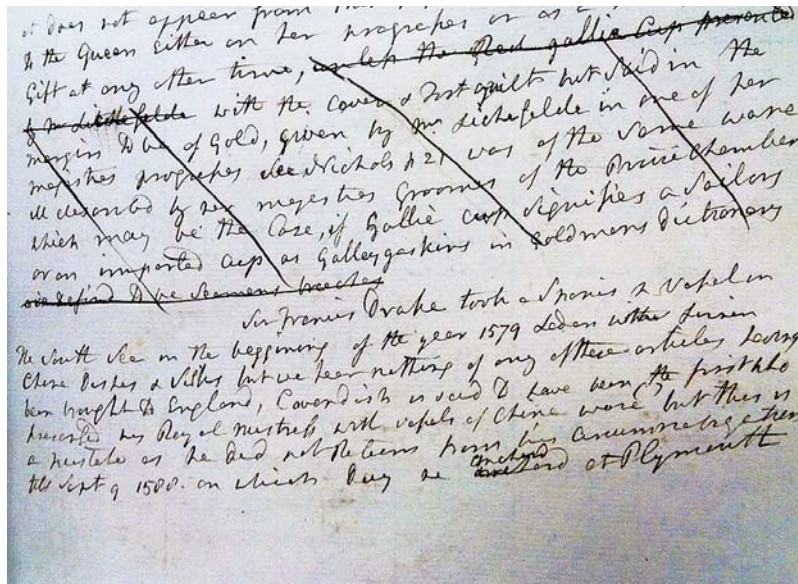


Figure 2. Sample of addenda from Lady Dorothea Banks's Dairy Book, MSS Knatchbull Papers, n.p. (U951/Z34). Courtesy of Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone. Reproduced by permission.

Transcription of the deleted addendum, which is in the hand of Joseph Banks:

The Red Gallic Cup presented by Mr Lichefelde with the cover and [illeg.] quilts but said in the margins to be Gold, given by Mr Lichefelde in one of her majesties properties See Nichols p. 21 was of the same ware described by her majesties Grooms of the [Assize?] Chamber which may be the Case, if Gallic cup signifies a sailors or an imported cup as Galley Gaskins in Goldmans dictionary or is defined as the seamens breeches.

Rest of the addendum:

Sir Francis Drake took a [illeg.] of vessel[?] in the South Sea in the beggining [sic] of the year 1579 [illeg.] with [illeg.] China Dishes [illeg.] but we hear nothing of any of these articles having been brought to England, Cover dish is said to have been the first who presented the[?] Royal Mistress with vessels of China ware but this is a mistake as he did not return from his circumnavigation til Sept of 1588 on which day he anchored at Plymouth.



Figure 3. *The Idol Vitex or Ninifo*, taken from Ogilby's China, p. 582, in "Lady Banks's Dairy Book," U951/Z34, 57. Compared to the original illustration of "Ninifo" in Ogilby's China (U951/Z34) (see Figure 3). Courtesy of Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone.



Figure 4. *The Idol Ninifo Reposing*, from a figure of porcelain in Lady Banks's Dairy, is juxtaposed beneath "Figure 1" in the Dairy Book. In "Lady Banks's Dairy Book," Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre, Kent Archives, MSS Knatchbull Papers U951/Z34, 57. Reproduced with permission. (U951/Z34). Courtesy of Kent History & Library Centre, Maidstone.



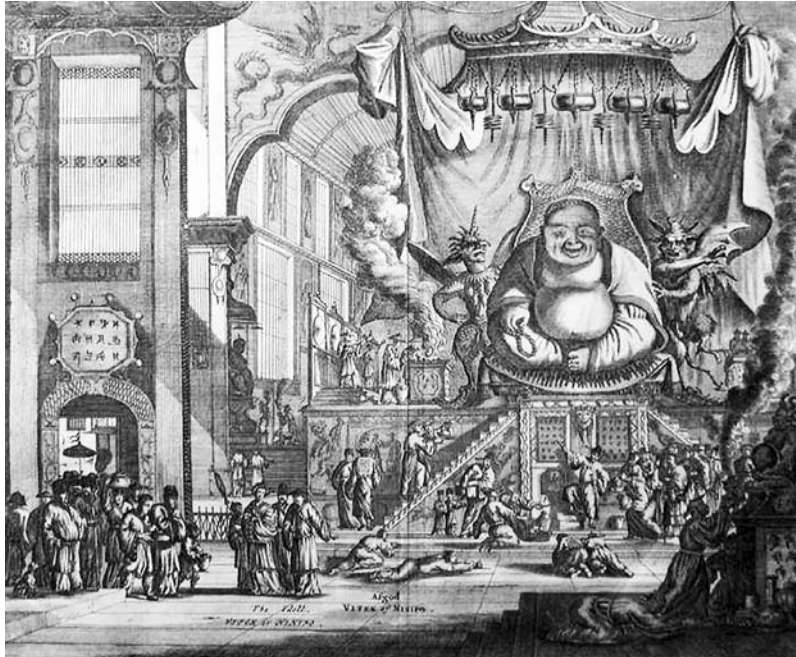


Figure 5. Illustration in Johann Nieuhoff, *An Embassy from the East-India Company of the United Provinces, to the Grand Tartar Cham, Emperor of China ... Englished and Set Forth with Their Several Sculptures by John Ogilby* (London: John Macock, 1669). This image is from a copy held in the BL System no. 011838296. © British Library Board. Asia, Pacific & Africa IOL.1947.c.97. [18] leaves of plates. Photographic reproduction is copyright the British Library. Reproduced by permission.